

**Sports**

# Meetings focus on keeping sports park momentum

By **Enterprise staff**

From page B1 | July 30, 2017

In an effort to “keep the momentum going” for the development of a Davis sports complex, two key public meetings have been scheduled by the city’s Parks and Community Services Department.

The first gathering, slated for Tuesday, Aug. 8, is designed to be informational. The second — on Thursday, Sept. 7 — will be an opportunity for area sports and recreation organizations to get involved and have a voice in the scope of the project and how to proceed most effectively.

“We’re inviting all the groups that participated in the city survey, all Sports Complex Project Task Force committee members and any other community organizations to come to the table to learn about the standings and findings” from the task force, said Dale Sumersille, city parks and community services director.

Participants also will hear what the Capstone/USC students had to say in their independent study of the issue, Sumersille said.

In addition to a review of task force findings, Sumersille expects the Aug. 8 meeting to include discussion of the potential to establish a community-based foundation, create an ad hoc committee/board and get an initial commitment from groups that might participate.

“We have a number of people who would like to proceed, keep the momentum going,” continued Sumersille, who believes these meetings will bring forward people with ideas on how to draw up plans, fund and build a Davis sports park.

Sumersille says group representatives should come away from the first gathering armed with ideas on how to move the project forward and will be able to “go back to their organizations, discuss it and we hope come back to the panel (in September) and say ‘We’re in.’ ”

By Sept. 7, Sumersille believes additional serious stakeholders will emerge. She alluded to some questions to be answered at that second meeting: “Do we create a 501(c)(3), a community-based organization? What are the rules and responsibilities of the board members? How many seats are we going to have?”

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Last July — after six months of task force hearings and study — the Davis City Council voted 5-0 to set early planning efforts for the complex into motion.

In its report to local officials, the task force said a complex would support more than 6,000 Davis residents who participate in sports (not including swim families) and could bring in big economic benefits as well as support for the city's wide range of athletic programs.

The new complex could cover 50 to 125 acres and would serve primarily softball, baseball and soccer groups.

Sumersille says the aquatics community — which was not involved in original task force work — has since been surveyed and is welcome to be involved in subsequent discussions.

“We got an overwhelming response,” Sumersille said of that survey.

After former Mayor Dan Wolk had resurrected sports park discussion in 2015 and eyed the old landfill site on County Road 102, the task force found three different, potential sites on the outskirts of Davis. But the task force declined to recommend a specific location at this point in the process.

Councilman Will Arnold — who also served as the task force's chair before his election to the council — explained last summer that after taking a closer look at the city's needs, he turned from being an advocate to an active supporter of the sports complex idea.

“Nearly half of (sports groups) have to leave town for practice ... that goes straight to equal access for our kids,” Arnold said. “That's an absolute dereliction of our duties as adults in this town.”

Concludes Sumersille: “We'd love to have all the stakeholders in the community — any organization, those that we identified and those we didn't identify — to come ... to have an opportunity to participate in discussions.”

Each meeting will run from 7 to 9 p.m. in the Club Room at the Veterans Memorial Center, 203 E. 14th St.

— *Staff writer Felicia Alvarez and Sports Editor Bruce Gallaudet contributed to this story.*

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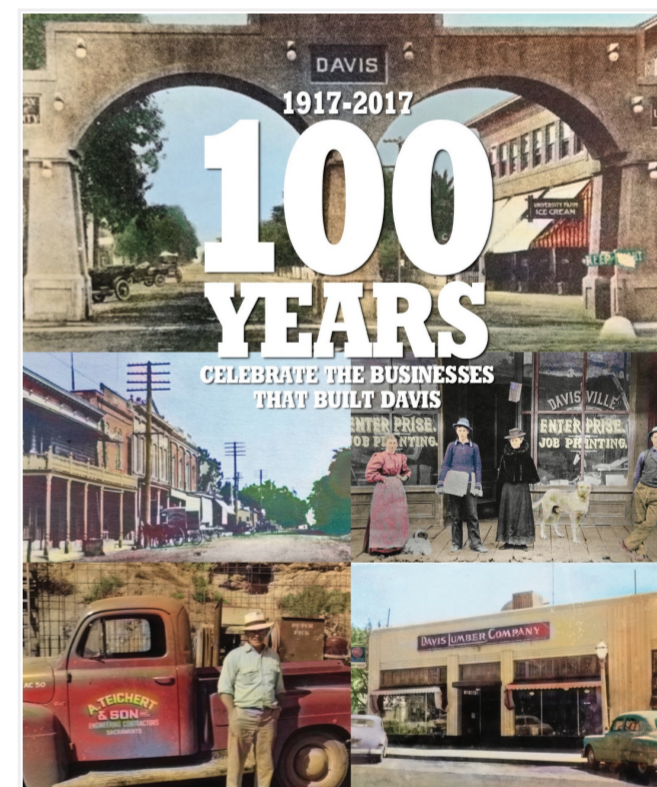
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